

Dear (House/Senate Committees of jurisdiction and leadership)

As the reauthorization deadline for the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) looms near, the nation's Governors are increasingly concerned that federal surface transportation programs will be shut down effective October 1st, 2003.

Earlier this year, we urged the Congress to pass a six-year reauthorization bill that provides a level of financial support that will allow us to continue our efforts to improve and maintain the highway and transit systems in our respective states. While we continue to support prompt passage of a well-funded, six-year reauthorization bill for these programs, we also recognize that the legislative calendar may now require that a short-term extension be passed. Although any extension will surely interrupt the lengthy process of planning, designing and delivering any major capital investment program, the Congress must not allow the current authorization to expire without taking the necessary action to:

- ensure that payments for current and new projects can be made from the Highway Trust Fund after September 30;
- provide authority and sufficient funds for surface transportation programs to continue after September 30;
- provide additional authorizations and apportionments and accompanying obligation authority for surface transportation programs to ensure continuity; and
- provide authority to permit states flexibility on a temporary basis to use program funds.

Such an extension should be adopted no later than September 30, 2003 and should not introduce new programs or new changes to existing programs, as those are most appropriately addressed in the context of a six-year bill. Furthermore, we urge you to expedite development and passage of a well-funded six-year reauthorization bill and obviate the need for additional short-term extensions.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important legislation.

Sincerely,